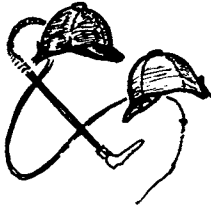


Edgie And Denny: True To The Line



The schedule of low-key activities and regular rides maintained throughout the war years was sufficient to keep a nucleus of the hunt membership intact. By 1946, it was time to resume the hunt's annual calendar. The pack, however, was moved back to Denny's Northbrook stables. As the Barrington countryside had become available to him, he realized this afforded him the opportunity to fulfill a new found dream of breeding a first rate pack of hounds. Through both firsthand experience and asking many questions, he learned the proper way to breed, train, and hunt hounds.

Denny summed it up best in his book when he wrote, "you don't have to be born with a fox's brush in your teeth to hunt hounds, nor a silver snaffle in your mouth to jump fences. All you need is a genuine enthusiasm, and enough intellectual curiosity to find out the facts about hounds and hunting, instead of being satisfied with hearsay and rumor."

In 1946, Edgie Throckmorton became Joint Master with Denny. Those first Joint Masters of the Fox River Valley Hunt had totally divergent personalities. Ideally, Joint Masters should be friends who share a love for their sport and complement each other in their expertise, whether it be hounds, development of country, landowner relations, membership, or financial support. They should work harmoniously for the good of the sport and fox hunting in general.

In this case, the Joint Masters were complete opposites. Denny was an introvert, dedicated to learning the art and science of hounds and hunting and pursuing theories. His Joint Master was quite the extrovert, who could deal with any situation and relished doing so. Edgie wanted to have a good time and insisted that those around him also have a good time. Edgie hunted for the sheer enjoyment of riding, while Denny rode to hunt and enjoy his hounds' progression. It was unusual that such very different men were able to

work together for the common success of the hunt. Edgie had the personality to develop the hunt country while Denny had the resources that Edgie needed to support the pack.

So, on Henry Bate's incidental suggestion years earlier of taking some hounds out to Dundee Township "just for fun," these two very different sportsmen met. Each recognized the other's ability. They combined them to successfully re-establish the hunt after World War II.

Denny was able to increase his knowledge through studying; attending hound shows, which are always informative and educational; faithfully attending the Master's Annual Meeting in New York; and always securing an answer to his questions. He worked tirelessly, developing an excellent pack of English hounds aided undoubtedly by the expertise of A. Henry Higginson. This meant breeding far more than he needed, allowing him the luxury of being able to cull hounds from each end of the pack. He could unburden himself of hounds that were either too fast or too slow, providing a well-balanced, even pack that would work harmoniously together in pursuit of the fox.



Denison B. Hull, MFH and staff - 1941.

Edgie, on the other hand, devoted himself to developing the country by getting to know all the farmers and landowners as well as their families. He was the entertainment on some of those rare slow hunts. He made certain that these farmers and landowners were invited to all the activities of the hunt. A story circulated that he had left a hunt breakfast, insisting that several of the other senior members accompany him. Still wearing their "pink" coats, they went to extend their condolences to the family of a recently deceased man. Recognizing his admirable intentions, the neighboring farmers at the house of the deceased were surprised and a little bemused as Edgie delivered a eulogy still wearing his scarlet coat.

His friends and neighbors were saddened when Edgie was able to enjoy only one season as Joint Master. He passed away suddenly in 1948, shortly after the hunt's annual meeting. His funeral service in Dundee was attended by many people from all walks of life. At his request, his ashes were scattered over the alfalfa field of his beloved Hail Weston Farm. He was very proud of that field, as it had given him a common bond of interest with the neighboring farmers.



Edgerton A. Throckmorton, MFH.

When Edgie became Joint Master, F. Donald Bateman became President, a position he held until 1957. Dues were raised to \$75 while the Riding Club members' dues were raised to \$50 and a capping fee of \$3 was established. This is a fee that guests are expected to pay when visiting a hunt. The term originated in England when the huntsman's cap was passed around for donations to feed the hounds and sometimes, the huntsman, too.

Upon Edgie's death, Harry Lowther, who had been a member since the hunt's inception, became Joint Master. He owned property at the junction of routes 62 and 68 and his house was one of the oldest in the Barrington countryside, dating from around 1862. Here again was a contrasting personality to Denny. Harry was a carefree man who totally enjoyed the social aspect of hunting. He was a rotund, short man who, according to Dick Bate, did not possess very good riding skills but never allowed that fact to bother him. Harry was quite casual about paying his MFH membership dues on a timely basis, and that upset Denny, who was very correct in such matters. Denny was particularly embarrassed on one occasion when the hounds were working a long, narrow corn field under the power lines south of Algonquin Road. While the hounds were in the corn, the men in the field chatted with each other. The hounds flushed a cock pheasant that flew up and was electrocuted on the power lines. At the time, it was reported that before this bird actually hit the ground, all the riders dove off their horses, and when the dust cleared, Denny's new Joint Master stood up, proudly holding the pheasant aloft and sporting a huge grin. The fact that the pheasant, more than the hounds, was the topic of conversation on the way home did not conform to Denny's standards of hunt behavior.

During the 1946-47 seasons, Dick Bate, who at that time was working for Harry Lowther in his business, was the honorary huntsman. Denny's hearing was deteriorating, and he found it reassuring that Dick's good ears were there to assist him when he was trying to follow hounds. But even though Dick carried the horn, Denny was still the leader. Harry Lowther and Tom White were honorary whips for Dick.

The late 1940s could be described as the heyday of the hunt because there had been a few years after the war to fine tune the activities. By then, in spite of Edgie's death, they appeared to have all the ingredients necessary for success and prosperity. They had an active, full membership, ample pasture and woodland country, and thanks to Edgie, excellent landowner relations, gravel roads with little traffic, and financial support for the sizeable pack. Their country extended from Higgins Road to Northwest Highway, and from Route 59 to the Fox River.

In spite of this, the minutes show that the hunt was experiencing some internal problems. This might indicate that an ideal situation regarding all that comprises a fox hunt can never occur, forcing those who hunt to simply enjoy whatever exists and work more diligently to correct the

problems. This was exactly what the 1948 membership did when they were faced with several dilemmas in running the hunt.

Denny was still keeping the pack at his Northbrook stables and vanning them out at his own expense. As the pack improved, he found that they hunted farther and faster into territory that the paneling committee had not made available. He too often experienced the ultimate frustration of all dedicated huntsmen when they are unable to get to hounds on a line. He constantly needed more panels from a group that valued the social aspect of hunting almost more than the sport.

Finances became another problem. Although there was a large membership, not everyone paid dues promptly, which created inevitable resentment. The hunt committee had agreed to underwrite all expenses (other than the hounds) up to \$3,000, but they still found the treasury short when it was time to buy lumber and build fences.

Lastly, Harry Lowther had moved his business to Peoria and Dick Bate could no longer hunt the hounds. The membership was shocked when, at the 1948 annual meeting, Denny offered his resignation. This was done while outlining three possible plans for the hunt. These were:

1. Invite the Longmeadow Hunt to a drag hunt in the Fox River Valley country one day a week. The estimated cost of maintaining the panels and a partial payment for the hounds was \$3,000.
2. Send the pack to Mississippi during the off-season, returning them to the Fox River Valley country in July or August accompanied by a huntsman from Mississippi, who would then return south until the following year. The estimated cost was \$6,000 to \$8,000.
3. Obtain the services of a year-round professional huntsman, to be furnished with a house as well as kennels and stables in the hunt country. The estimated cost would be \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year.

After much discussion, the hunt committee chose the third plan. And so, with renewed enthusiasm from a vote of confidence, Denny was persuaded to remain as Master of the Fox River Valley Hunt.

Edward Chadwell was the first professional huntsman hired by the hunt. The Chadwell name was renowned in hunting circles, and the Masters were pleased to have secured his services. His brother, Earl, was better known, but Edward was an excellent horseman and quite good with hounds. However, "ill health" prevented him from completing the season. Denny had to go on record and report to the Masters Association that Chadwell was totally unable to hunt the fox in his condition. Consequently, the hounds did not complete the 1948 season.

In November of that year, Denny wrote the hunt committee a confidential letter explaining that Northbrook's Longmeadow Hunt was experiencing the loss of their country and that they wished to merge with the Fox River Valley Hunt. It was his belief that if the Fox River Valley Hunt had something solid to offer, the Longmeadow members would want to join it rather than



l. to r. Joshua D. Derry, George VanHagen, Peter Sachs and Harry Lowther, MFH.

merge or simply visit other hunts in the area. With that in mind, Denny proposed to buy a sizeable farm that was available on Donlea Road, adjacent to the farm of the pioneer Jackson family. This would allow him to build a kennel and remodel the two houses on the farm, as well as offer a barn for hunt horses. Consequently, he purchased Big Oak Farm which lay on either side of Donlea Road, and built his third kennel on the curve of that road, which had long been hazardous to drivers.

Nineteen forty-nine was the beginning of a decade of good sport and camaraderie. Patrick Regan was hired to hunt the hounds when they were settled in their new kennels. The present-day Polo Barn at the Riding Center was built on Big Oak Farm for hunt horses. Al Moore, a professional horseman who had been Denny's groom in Northbrook, moved into the newly remodeled house, now the Fox River Valley huntsman's cottage. The stable afforded room for boarders who were mostly former Longmeadow Hunt members. Denny took total responsibility for the huntsman as well as the pack, so all other funds went to maintaining the country. The dues that year were raised to \$200 for regular members. The hunt committee, which numbered twelve, added an extra \$500. Caps were raised to \$10. With this renewed enthusiasm, Jack Thompson donated part of his green barn on Algonquin Road for a clubhouse where breakfasts and other social activities were held. There was now a sizeable social membership.



l. to r. Thomas C. White and Denison B. Hull, MFH.

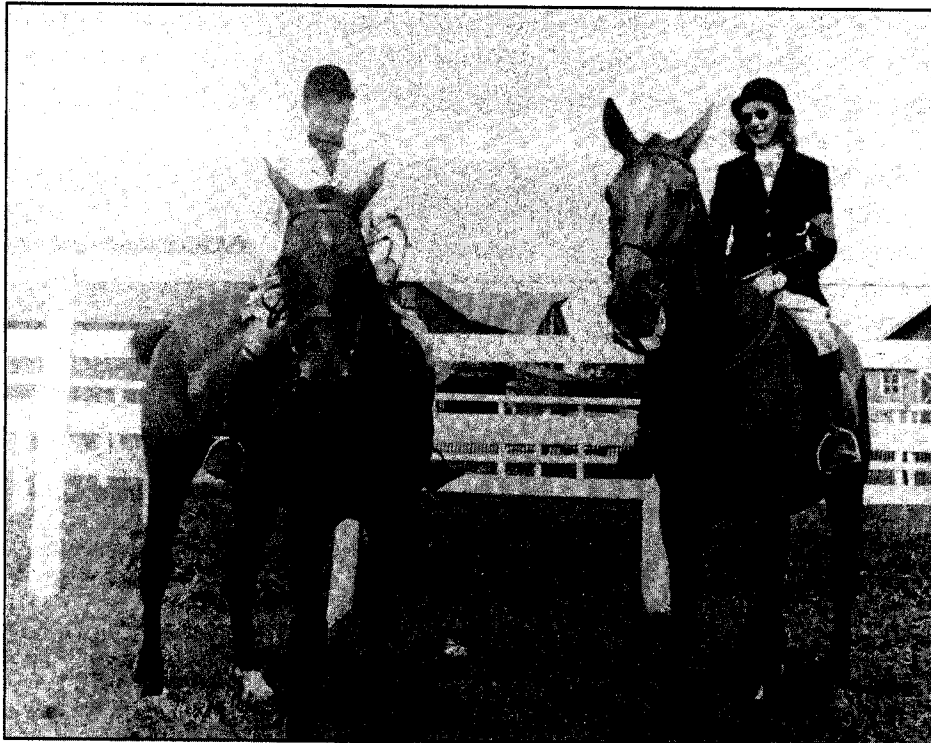
Various members took responsibility for maintaining the country in the area where they lived. Virginia Cardwell, who was by then married to S.L. Reinhardt, took the country north of Spring Creek Road since she was then living on Braeburn Road. Percy Oliver, who lived on Ridge Road in the Uplands property, assumed responsibility for everything south of Spring Creek Road to Donlea Road. Penny Taylor, a member who lived on Algonquin Road, took the country in the Midget Mountain area between Routes 62 and 68 and then to the river.

During these years, the hunt continued to host the farmer's party, which grew in popularity every year. Joint meets with other Chicagoland hunts were always well attended.

In 1950, Harry Lowther had to move away. Denny again became the sole Master of the hunt. He established a trust fund of \$4,000 to help the hunt with its ever-increasing problem of funding. The pack was sizeable and an enormous cooker was purchased to provide hot meals for the hounds in the cold months. A finder's fee was paid to any farmer on whose land a fox was found. Building, kennel maintenance, and panel maintenance were ongoing.

With the generosity and resources of Denny and the enthusiasm of a large membership, the hunt enjoyed a decade of prosperity. They had excellent country, an experienced professional huntsman who would successfully show hounds at the prestigious Bryn Mawr Hound Show in Pennsylvania, and fine new kennels adjacent to an excellent stable full of boarders.

Even so, there were ominous hints of change. As early as 1950, at the annual meeting, Tony Bateman asked that all members "keep a constant vigil of the new people moving into the area to see that their interests were similar to the traditions of the area." This reflected the very beginning of pressure on quiet, rural Barrington.



Edgerton A. Throckmorton, MFH and Virginia Cardwell, Honorary Secretary.